



Water vessel

Not on display

Title/Description: Water vessel

Object Type: Vessel

Materials: Earthenware

Measurements: h. 165 x w. 168 x d. 185 mm

Accession Number: 811

Historic Period: Mid 19th century

Production Place: Fiji, Oceania, Pacific, Southeast Viti Levu

This water vessel (*saqa moli*) is composed of four linked chambers, modelled to represent citrus fruits (*moli*). One chamber has an access hole and its opposite partner a spout positioned on the outer rim. The handle is pierced at the top for a suspension cord. Pottery manufacture was the work of women and there were a number of centres of production in Fiji. This example probably comes

from the Rewa delta area of south-east Viti Levu.

Completed pots, made from local clay and a temper of river sand, were open-fired and a glaze, or more accurately a varnish, of local kauri gum (*makadre*) was applied immediately to help resist leakage (see Ewins, 1982: 70-3 for a similar example and details). Such elaborate works as these were easily damaged and this one has been broken and repaired.

Pottery appears to have been made in Fiji without interruption since earliest human settlement (before 1300 BC on current evidence, Bellwood, 1978: 250), though production is now mainly directed at the commercial market. Formerly a wide variety was used for cooking and storage, but in the late nineteenth century both production and use declined as European containers became increasingly available.

Steven Hooper, 1997

Entry taken from *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American Art*, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997) p. 37.
